

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An endoscope apparatus comprising:
an endoscope including an elongated flexible tube having flexibility such that a part of the flexible tube is inserted in at least an inspection object space;
an endoscope apparatus main body connected to the endoscope for use;
and

a flexible tube holding member including a tip fixing portion, which is arranged such that it projects on an outer peripheral surface of a cylindrical portion, to fix a tip of the flexible tube thereto, ~~which is~~ the flexible tube holding member being detachably attached to the endoscope apparatus main body, and around which the flexible tube ~~[[is]] being wound around the flexible tube holding member with the tip of the flexible tube inserted in the tip fixing portion~~ to hold the flexible tube of which the tip is inserted in the tip fixing portion.

2. (Currently Amended) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 1, ~~further comprising a storage section which stores the flexible tube holding member and~~ wherein the flexible tube holding member is stored in a storage section which is detachably attached to the endoscope apparatus main body.

3. (Original) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the flexible tube comprises a head portion in which an optical system in an endmost position is incorporated, a curved portion capable of being bent/operated in a remote manner, and an elongated flexible tube portion.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Original) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the flexible tube comprises the insertion portion, further a universal cable which has flexibility and which transmits an illuminating light and an electric signal, and an

intermediate connecting portion which connects the insertion portion to the universal cable.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Original) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the flexible tube comprises the insertion portion, further a universal cable which has flexibility and which transmits an illuminating light and an electric signal, an operation portion which connects the insertion portion to the universal cable and which controls an operation of the insertion portion, and a monitor portion which displays an image photographed by the head portion by operation of the operation portion and image information.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Original) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the storage section is a container which contains the flexible tube holding member.

10. (Original) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the storage section is a support shaft which detachably supports the flexible tube holding member with respect to the endoscope apparatus main body.

11. (Original) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the flexible tube holding member has a rotatable drum or bobbin shape which rotates the flexible tube with a defined diameter.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Original) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the flexible tube holding member comprises a rotary member around which the flexible tube is wound from a tip side.

14.-16. (Canceled)

17. (Original) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the flexible tube holding member comprises a first fitting portion which is capable of engaging with and storing the intermediate connecting portion connecting the insertion portion to the universal cable and which has a concave shape.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Original) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the flexible tube holding member comprises a second fitting portion which is capable of engaging with and storing the operation portion connecting the insertion portion to the universal cable and the intermediate connecting portion including the monitor portion.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Original) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the storage section comprises an engagement portion which engages with the flexible tube and engages with the endoscope apparatus main body and is integrally movable.

22. (Canceled)

23. (New) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the tip fixing portion is made of a material softer than the material for the tip of the flexible tube.

24. (New) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the tip fixing portion is formed to have a holder-like configuration with resin or rubber.